

The Specialisation Process

Students who enter year one of the Degree in Circus Arts undergo a process during the first term to determine their circus discipline specialisation. This is a collaborative process between the student, teachers and HE programming staff, leading to a decision about which circus discipline is suited mentally, physically and creatively to that person, or persons in the case of group disciplines.

Our goal is to help the young circus performer to establish the foundation for a long and fruitful career. We aim for all students in this first year to have completed this process by the end of the Autumn term (December) although extensions are possible where necessary up until the end of Spring term (March).

This process takes the form of an assessed module 'Specialisation Assessments'. The module provides students with the opportunity to research and experience a range of appropriate circus disciplines. At the end of the module, students will have gained insight and knowledge that will allow them to make a more informed and positive choice of their area of circus specialisation. Students will be challenged to discover new discipline areas as well as re-evaluate any preconceptions they may have in relation to those previously experienced.

Stages of the process:

1. Students are asked to begin researching circus disciplines prior to the start of the course
2. In the 1st half term students will be scheduled into various discipline workshops to give them an idea of what is available and on offer to them.
3. Students will have a 1:1 meeting to discuss the process and to give an indication of their 3 specific areas of interest that will be assessed before half term
4. Following submission of interest these classes will be scheduled into the programme to be assessed after half term. Students try one of each discipline for three weeks, during this time they can choose to continue in a certain area or drop and change to another potential choice. During this process students are required to ask teachers for feedback and gain insight into whether this is the right direction to go in. There will be a meeting to discuss teacher feedback, student impressions and other considerations. We hope to come to a decision by the end of the 1st term but this process can continue until the Spring Half term.
5. Following the meeting, the Course Manager will confirm which specialisations the student will be able to continue the course with.

6. A student's suitability and potential in these specialisations will be assessed by discipline teachers who will report back to the Higher Education team. There may also be input from an athletic therapist regarding the student's physical suitability for a particular discipline. These assessments will inform further discussions between the student and their Course Manager. At any stage a student can and should make an appointment to ask their Course Manager for advice and/or inform them of any conclusions they have formed
7. The student's final discipline choice will be made in conjunction with their Course Manager, from a good understanding of the student's physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses as well as their creative motivations, informed by the stages outlined above. The choice of disciplines by students across the year group will also need to be balanced against available resources, and where the number of students who wish to undertake a specific discipline outweighs the resource available, selection will be based on the students who show the greatest potential to reach the required level in that specific discipline in the time available on the programme. The final decision will be reached by the Course Manager in discussion with the student, and with the approval of the Head of Higher Education.
8. Students begin working in their selected discipline once it has been signed off by the Course Managers
9. Students are assessed on their engagement with the specialisation process – please refer to the Specialisation Assessments module guide for further details on assessment criteria.
10. Cyr wheel is by invitation only and requires a good level of Acrobatic skill.
11. Any student who wishes to try teeterboard must have a high level of trampoline and have found and agreed with another student of a similar ability to partner for this process
12. Any student who wishes to try hand to hand must have a good level of acrobatics and have found and agreed with another student of a similar ability to partner for this process.
13. Students that come with a discipline and intend on continuing can start straight away but must be assessed by a teacher for competency and be discussed with the HE Team. This is also dependent on whether the school has space to accommodate this discipline.